



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

May 2, 2021

Mayor Durkan and Chief Scoggins:

Over the weekend, a group of 17 Central District constituents wrote to my Council office, deeply concerned about reports that the Seattle Fire Department plans to set controlled fires to a soon-to-be-demolished church building at 2001 South Norman Street, apparently for the purpose of conducting fire and rescue training. (see attached letter)

The Judkins Park neighbors learned of these plans from the property owner, a Medina developer who purchased the building and lot from the Christian Restoration Center. The property owner, Jay Pathy, plans to demolish the building later this year, and has told the nearby residents that he has made this arrangement for controlled fires with the Fire Department prior to demolition.

Please confirm whether or not the Fire Department has agreed to this arrangement, and provide any documents, correspondence, and agreements with Mr. Pathy or his company, Umtanum Build JP LLC.

I recognize that fighting fires is hazardous and courageous work that requires serious training, and I wholeheartedly support such training for fire department workers. However, I am extremely troubled to hear about the idea of controlled fires in this community. Surely the SFD has other training options.

According to the [Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map](#), the neighborhood already ranks among the highest in the region for environmental health disparities, air pollution, and exposure to diesel emissions and other toxins. Controlled burns at any level will only increase area pollution and worsen health disparities. As the Norman Street neighbors wrote, "We as a collective neighborhood did not ask to be exposed to these toxins."

Having the Fire Department intentionally set fire to a building - a church building, no less - in a dense working-class neighborhood already overburdened with environmental disparity sounds like a terrible idea. Would fire department officials consider such an intentional environmental threat to residents of an upper-class, predominantly white neighborhood such as Medina?

If indeed the Fire Department was considering controlled burns in this church building, I urge you to immediately and publicly renounce such plans.

My Council office stands ready to support and work with the Norman Street neighbors to stop any plan for intentional fire-setting in their neighborhood. Along with the Norman Street neighbors, I await your prompt and complete explanation of this matter.

Sincerely,



Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant

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*From: Rocky Horan <rockyhoran@gmail.com>*

*Date: Fri, Apr 30, 2021 at 2:00 PM*

*Subject: Concerned Neighbors - SFD Fire Training in our neighborhood*

*To: <kshama.sawant@seattle.gov>, <teresa.mosqueda@seattle.gov>, <lorena.gonzalez@seattle.gov>, <jenny.durkan@seattle.gov>*

*Cc: <Rienusandsarah@gmail.com>, Diego Gomes Kjerulf <DIEGO.DJG@gmail.com>, David Talley <david0912@gmail.com>, <Braggy8@gmail.com>, <Hldahlem@gmail.com>, <Jevon.boudreaux@yahoo.com>, <m.hazelman@gmail.com>, <Cailanickerson@gmail.com>, <rplorinoco@gmail.com>, <jim.caldarise@gmail.com>, <Dunc2000@hotmail.com>, <SFDPIO@seattle.gov>, <sean.e.hopper@gmail.com>, <Sissimattox@gmail.com>, <tomper2@hotmail.com>, <christopher.w.kimball@gmail.com>*

*Good day Seattle City Council members & Mayor Durkin,*

*We are writing to all of you from the Judkins Park neighborhood. We collectively live on the 1100th block of 21st ave south and 2000 block of S. Norman Street. We learned today from the developer of parcel 2001 South Normal Street that the Seattle Fire Department will be using the old church for fire and rescue training. The plan is for multiple control blazes during the day before demolishing the church in June in order to build new townhouses. Although we understand that change and density is inherent and part of living in a growing neighborhood,*

*we strongly oppose control burns and fires in our neighborhood. As a neighborhood we ask you to stop the SFD from exposing our neighborhood to air pollutants and toxins which are detrimental to our health.*

*There are multiple studies that prove air pollution has long term health effects . There's also racial and socioeconomic disparities in pollution, including right here in Seattle. According to The Washington State department of health <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/> our neighborhood already ranks this confined area as 10/10 for Diesel pollution risk, 8/10 Social vulnerability to hazards, 8/10 for lead exposure risk, and 7/10 for health disparities. Why are we being exposed to more toxins when we already face more risks and health disparities than much of Seattle?*

*We ask as a neighborhood that you immediately stop Seattle Fire department from using this parcel for any training which include control blazes. Search and rescue missions and those without control burns/fires, which expose the neighborhood to air pollutants are welcome.*

*We as a collective neighborhood did not ask to be exposed to these toxins.*

*Sincerely,*

*Rocky Horan*

*Diego Gomes*

*David Tally*

*Rienus and Sarah Hazelman*

*Jessica Bragg*

*Hannah & Jevon Boudreaux*

*Marienus Hazelman*

*Caila Nickerson*

*Raymond Plorinco*

*Jim Caldarise*

*Michael Harris*

*Sean Hopper*

*Sissi Mattox*

*Tom Perdue*

*Chris Kimball*

